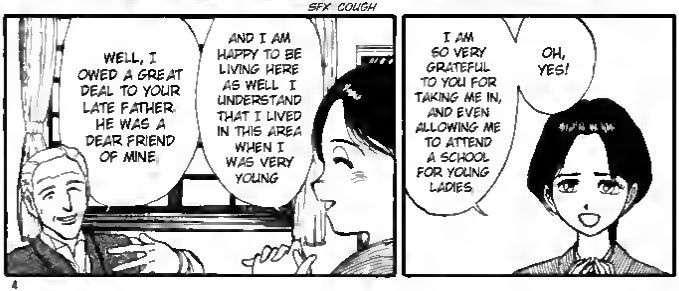
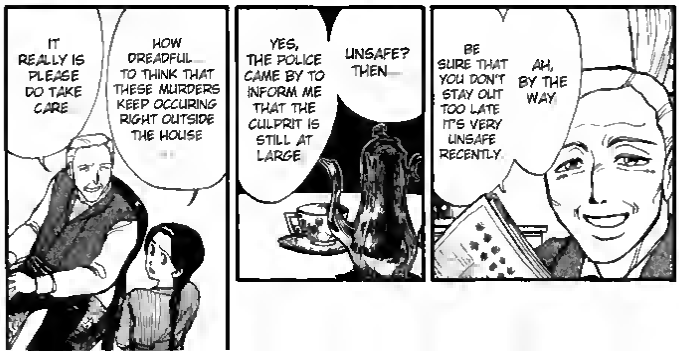
TELL US SOME KIND OF STORY, PLEASE.
WE'RE SO BORED ...
A STORY?
...LET'S SEE HOW YOU LIKE THIS ONE, THEN. A TALE FROM THE TAISHOU ER...
WHEN THE FLOWERS OF CULTURE WERE IN FULL BLOOM, BUT FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE, THE NIGHT WAS STILL PITCH BLACK.
SHALL WE GO OUT WALKING BY NIGHT?
<First Half>

...THUNDER...? IS THIS WHAT THEY CALL SPRING THUNDER ...?
SFX: GOROGORO (ROLLING)
...CHERRY BLOSSOMS, EVERYWHERE YOU TURN.
...CHERRY BLOS-SOMS ...
ガバッ
SFX: CHIRP CHIRP
ちゅん

I'M LEAVING FOR THE DAY, UNCLE
ARE YOU SETTLED IN AT SCHOOL BY NOW, SAYOKO-SAN?
THAT DREAM AGAIN... I'VE BEEN HAVING IT SINCE I WAS SMALL...
THAT'S IT... I MUST DO IT TONIGHT ...!
SFX: COUGH


WELL, I OWED A GREAT DEAL TO YOUR LATE FATHER. HE WAS A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE.
AND I AM HAPPY TO BE LIVING HERE AS WELL I UNDERSTAND THAT I LIVED IN THIS AREA WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG
I AM SO VERY GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR TAKING ME IN, AND EVEN ALLOWING ME TO ATTEND A SCHOOL FOR YOUNG LADIES.
OH, YES!

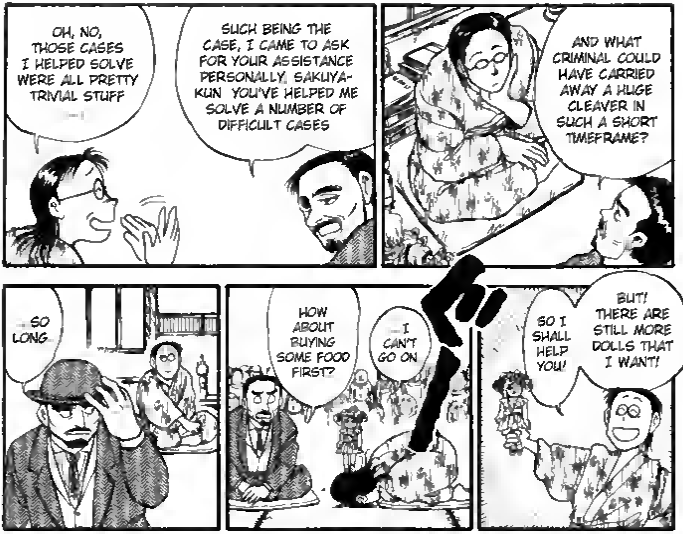



IT REALLY IS PLEASE DO TAKE CARE
HOW DREADFUL... TO THINK THAT THESE MURDERS KEEP OCCURING RIGHT OUTSIDE THE HOUSE
YES, THE POLICE CAME BY TO INFORM ME THAT THE CULPRIT IS STILL AT LARGE
UNSAFE? THEN...
BE SURE THAT YOU DON'T STAY OUT TOO LATE IT'S VERY UNSAFE RECENTLY.
AH, BY THE WAY

I'LL BE OFF NOW!
キィ
ガタン
...SO, HOW GOES YOUR INVESTIGATION OF THE CLOCK TOWER KILLINGS?
DOLL AFTER DOLL! BOOK AFTER BOOK! THERE'S NOTHING ELSE IN YOUR HOUSE!
SORRY ABOUT THE CLUTTER.
EVERY TIME I'M HERE I GET THE CREEPS

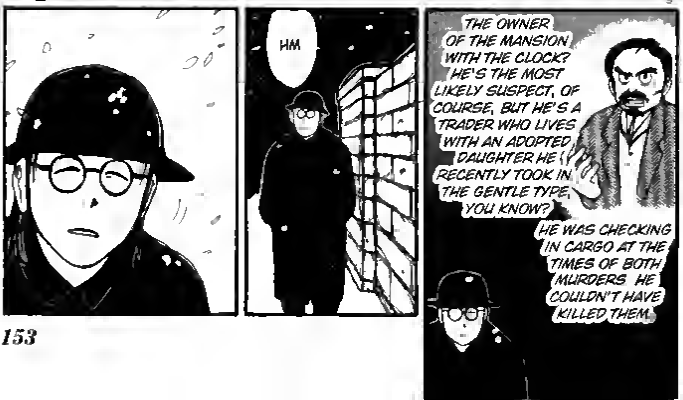
MAYBE YOU CAME ALL THIS WAY JUST TO BRING ME SOME RICE...?
OH, I SEE. SO, HAKOTA-SAN, CHIEF CLERK OF INVESTIGATION AT THE CRIMINAL BUREAU
AND HOLD YOUR HORSES, SAKUYA-KUN. THAT'S POLICE BUSINESS, YOU KNOW.
OH, THAT'S JUST SOME SENSATIONAL NAME THE PAPERS DREAMED UP
MAYBE YOU SHOULD BE MORE WORRIED ABOUT MODERN TIMES INSTEAD.
SFX: GROWL
HOW RUDE! THE SPIRITS OF DIVINE BEINGS HAVE DWELLED WITHIN DOLLS SINCE ANCIENT TIMES...!
Here we go...
BECAUSE YOU SPEND TOO MUCH MONEY ON THESE USELESS DOLLS!
TO BE HONEST, IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I HAD ANYTHING GOOD TO EAT.
SFX: GROWL
DEAR ME... THE LOOK OF THAT CORPSE WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE EVEN ME UNCOMFORTABLE.
YOZAKURA STREET, UPTOWN, IS FAMOUS FOR BEING LINED WITH CHERRY TREES, JUST AS ITS NAME IMPLIES...
THE FIRST INCIDENT OCCURED LAST WEEK.
102 KUROI TSUKI (CHERRY BLOSSOMS)
IT HAPPENED BENEATH THE CLOCK TOWER ATTACHED TO ONE OF THE HOUSES NEXT TO A FOREST OF CHERRY TREES
THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A LOT OF RICH FOLK LIVING THERE THOUGH THEIR HOUSES ARE SPREAD FAR APART

THE WAY IT LAY THERE BATHED IN FLOWER PETALS...
WITH ITS ENTIRE FRONT HALF MISSING...
SOME PASSERS-BY RUSHED OVER AS SOON AS THEY HEARD A SOUND. NOTHING WAS LEFT BUT THE CORPSE
THE SECOND INCIDENT WAS THIS WEEK. AGAIN THE SAME HOUSE. BUT ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE
BY WHAT POSSIBLE MEANS COULD YOU SLICE A HUMAN BEING IN HALF?! SOME KIND OF HUGE CLEAVER?
BUT BEYOND THAT, NOTHING.
WE MANAGED TO DETERMINE THAT THE MURDERED WOMAN WAS LIKELY A HOSTESS AT SOME CAFE...
WE WERE STUMPED JUDGING FROM HER CLOTHING...
AND BESIDES...
WHAT KIND OF MOTIVE COULD THERE HAVE BEEN?!


OH, NO, THOSE CASES I HELPED SOLVE WERE ALL PRETTY TRIVIAL STUFF
SUCH BEING THE CASE, I CAME TO ASK FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE PERSONALLY, SAKUYA-KUN. YOU'VE HELPED ME SOLVE A NUMBER OF DIFFICULT CASES
AND WHAT CRIMINAL COULD HAVE CARRIED AWAY A HUGE CLEAVER IN SUCH A SHORT TIMEFRAME?
...SO LONG...
HOW ABOUT BUYING SOME FOOD FIRST?
...I CAN'T GO ON...
SO I SHALL HELP YOU!
BUT! THERE ARE STILL MORE DOLLS THAT I WANT!
SFX: GROWL

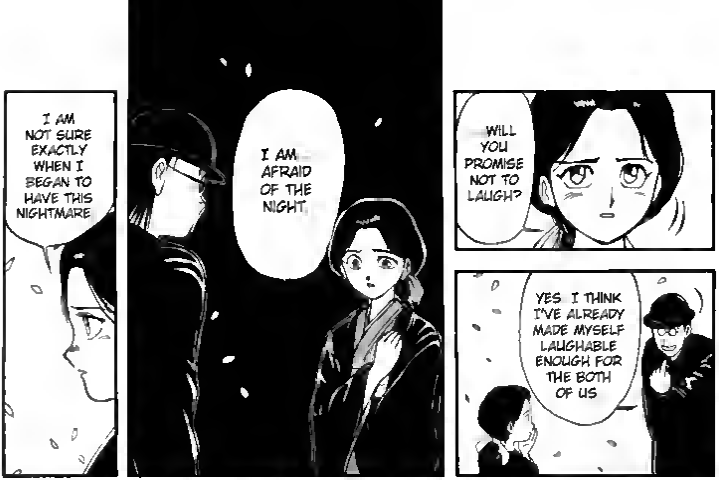
DON'T KNOW MYSELF WHAT I OUGHT TO DO...
...YOU STILL WON'T RETURN TO THE DOJO, I ASSUME?
I STILL...
YOUR FATHER'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU TOO
ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU LET ALL THAT GO?

ヒュウガ
THERE'S BEEN A MURDER ON THIS SIDE AND ON THE OTHER ONE AS WELL
SO THIS IS THE CLOCK TOWER AT THE CENTER OF THE INCIDENTS.
9


HM
THE OWNER OF THE MANSION WITH THE CLOCK? HE'S THE MOST LIKELY SUSPECT, OF COURSE, BUT HE'S A TRADER WHO LIVES WITH AN ADOPTED DAUGHTER HE RECENTLY TOOK IN. THE GENTLE TYPE, YOU KNOW?
HE WAS CHECKING IN CARGO AT THE TIMES OF BOTH MURDERS. HE COULDN'T HAVE KILLED THEM.

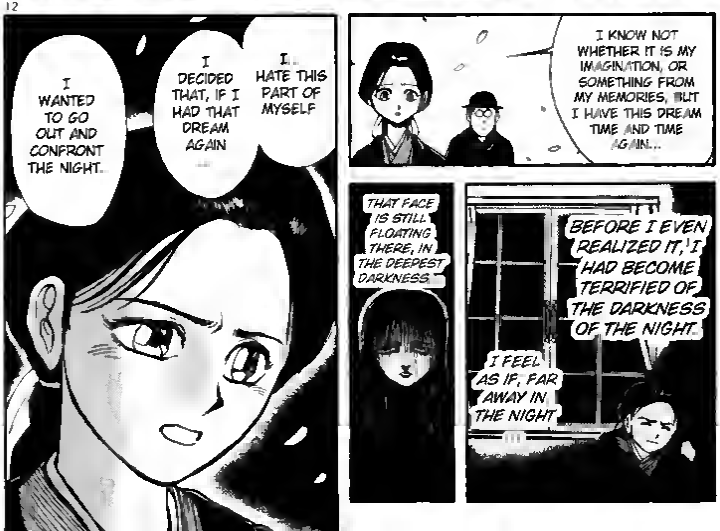
OH, MY.
I'VE NEVER SEEN CHERRY BLOSSOM SPRITE BEFORE.
EEK!
SFX SLIP
SFX ZIP, POW!

WAIT JUST A MOMENT! I'M NOT ANYBODY SUSPICIOUS!
EE—
かりん
IF YOU WAKE SOMEONE UP THERE'LL BE A LOT OF TROUBLE! I MIGHT BE MISTAKEN FOR A KILLER!
AND ESPECIALLY DON'T GO YELLING, "EEEEK!"
SO THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO REASON TO BE AFRAID! SO PLEASE DON'T START CRYING OR SCREAMING OR STRUGGLING!
I CAME TO INVESTIGATE SOME INCIDENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE HERE.
MY NAME IS SAKUYA SHIJUHEI. I'M HERE AS A DETECTIVE.
THANK YOU... FOR NOT SCREAMING AND STRUGGLING...!
SIGH
HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE ...!
HEE HEE
RIGHT ?! RIGHT ?!
AND THEN I'D BE TAKEN TO THE POLICE! IT WOULD BE VERY UNSEEMLY FOR A DETECTIVE TO BE ARRESTED, DON'T YOU THINK?!
OH! YOU DON'T NEED TO ANSWER IF YOU DON'T WANT TO!
MAY I ASK A QUESTION NOW? WHY ARE YOU GOING OUTSIDE AT NIGHT?


I AM NOT SURE EXACTLY WHEN I BEGAN TO HAVE THIS NIGHTMARE
I AM AFRAID OF THE NIGHT.
WILL YOU PROMISE NOT TO LAUGH?
YES. I THINK I'VE ALREADY MADE MYSELF LAUGHABLE ENOUGH FOR THE BOTH OF US

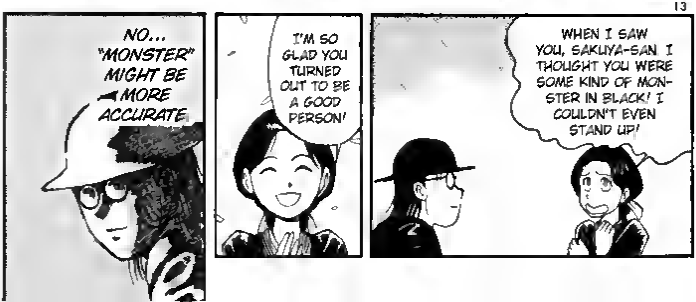
I DREAM OF A WOMAN'S FRESHLY SEVERED HEAD FLYING THROUGH A FOREST OF CHERRY BLOSSOMS AT NIGHT.

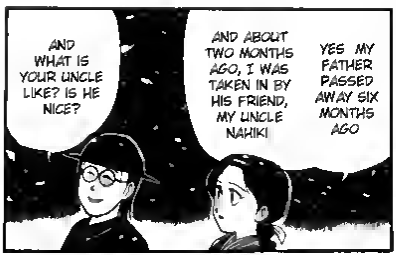



I WANTED TO GO OUT AND CONFRONT THE NIGHT.
I DECIDED THAT, IF I HAD THAT DREAM AGAIN...
I... HATE THIS PART OF MYSELF
I KNOW NOT WHETHER IT IS MY IMAGINATION, OR SOMETHING FROM MY MEMORIES, BUT I HAVE THIS DREAM TIME AND TIME AGAIN...
THAT FACE IS STILL FLOATING THERE, IN THE DEEPEST DARKNESS.
BEFORE I EVEN REALIZED IT, I HAD BECOME TERRIFIED OF THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT.
I FEEL AS IF, FAR AWAY IN THE NIGHT

I'M A SILLY GIRL... WOMAN ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE WAKING UP TO THE MODERN AGE, FIGHTING AGAINST PUBLIC OPINION FOR THE VOTE AND OTHER SUCH THINGS, AND I'M JUST...
MIGHT MAKE IT... LESS FRIGHTENING...
I THOUGHT THAT IF THE NIGHT FRIGHTENS ME, THEN... GOING OUT INTO THAT NIGHT...
SAKUYA, STOP! YOU'VE WON THE MATCH! IT'S OVER!
OH, NO...
OH, NO...! I WAS SO AFRAID OF COMING OUTSIDE THAT I THOUGHT I MIGHT DIE!
CONFRONTING THE NIGHT... YOU'RE REMARKABLE!
OH... NO, NOTHING...
IS SOMETHING WRONG?

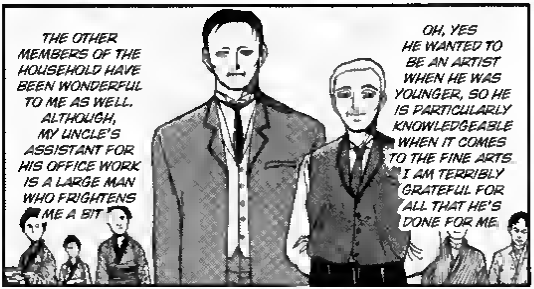



NO... "MONSTER" MIGHT BE A MORE ACCURATE...
I'M SO GLAD YOU TURNED OUT TO BE A GOOD PERSON!
WHEN I SAW YOU, SAKUYA-SAN I THOUGHT YOU WERE SOME KIND OF MONSTER IN BLACK! I COULDN'T EVEN STAND UP!


AND WHAT IS YOUR UNCLE LIKE? IS HE NICE?
AND ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO, I WAS TAKEN IN BY HIS FRIEND, MY UNCLE NAKIKI
YES MY FATHER PASSED AWAY SIX MONTHS AGO

THAT'S RIGHT. I ASSUME YOU LIVE IN THIS HOUSE?
YOU SAID YOU CAME HERE TO LOOK INTO THOSE INCIDENTS?

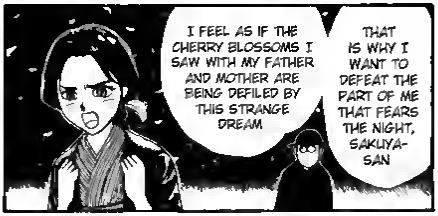
BUT IT WORRIES ME THAT HE HAS BEEN COUGHING A GREAT DEAL LATELY

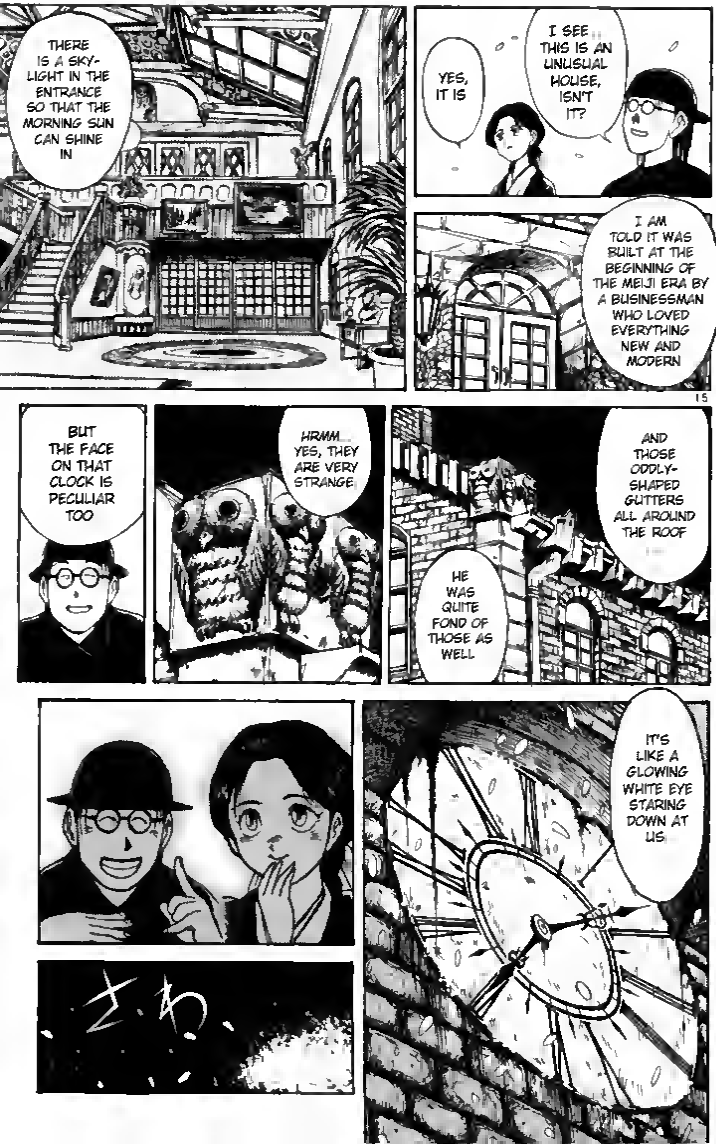

THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD HAVE BEEN WONDERFUL TO ME AS WELL. ALTHOUGH, MY UNCLE'S ASSISTANT FOR HIS OFFICE WORK IS A LARGE MAN WHO FRIGHTENS ME A BIT
OH, YES HE WANTED TO BE AN ARTIST WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER, SO HE IS PARTICULARLY KNOWLEDGEABLE WHEN IT COMES TO THE FINE ARTS. I AM TERRIBLY GRATEFUL FOR ALL THAT HE'S DONE FOR ME.

IT MORTIFIES ME THAT I CANNOT SO MUCH AS LOOK OUTSIDE AT THE NIGHT THAT I SO FEAR.
EVEN THOUGH I LIVE IN A LOVELY HOUSE, SURROUNDED BY CHERRY BLOSSOMS

EVER SINCE I CAN REMEMBER, WE WOULD GO OUT AT NIGHT TO SEE THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS.
I USED TO LIVE IN THIS AREA BACK WHEN MY PARENTS WERE STILL ALIVE.

AND WHAT HAS THE MOVE BEEN LIKE FOR YOU?


I FEEL AS IF THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS I SAW WITH MY FATHER AND MOTHER ARE BEING DEFILED BY THIS STRANGE DREAM.
THAT IS WHY I WANT TO DEFEAT THE PART OF ME THAT FEARS THE NIGHT, SAKUYA-SAN

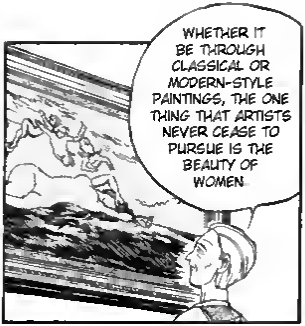

THERE IS A SKY-LIGHT IN THE ENTRANCE SO THAT THE MORNING SUN CAN SHINE IN
YES, IT IS
I SEE... THIS IS AN UNUSUAL HOUSE, ISN'T IT?
I AM TOLD IT WAS BUILT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEIJI ERA BY A BUSINESSMAN WHO LOVED EVERYTHING NEW AND MODERN
15
BUT THE FACE ON THAT CLOCK IS PECULIAR TOO
HRMM... YES, THEY ARE VERY STRANGE.
AND THOSE ODDLY-SHAPED GUTTERS ALL AROUND THE ROOF
HE WAS QUITE FOND OF THOSE AS WELL
IT'S LIKE A GLOWING WHITE EYE STARING DOWN AT US.
さわ

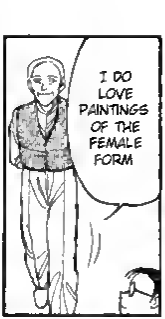
SORRY TO INTERFERE IN YOUR CONFRONTATION WITH THE NIGHT..
BUT GIVEN HOW DANGEROUS IT IS OUTSIDE, I THINK YOU SHOULD RETURN TO BED SOON
ER...
YES? WHAT IS IT?
...WILL WE BE ABLE TO MEET AGAIN?
WHAT ?!
I MEAN... ER...
IT WAS VERY FUN TALKING WITH YOU, SAKUYA-SAN.
SO...
FIRST, YOU'D BETTER DEFEAT WHATEVER IS WAITING IN THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT.
IF YOU EVER NEED ANYONE TO BACK YOU UP, I WILL BE GLAD TO SERVE AS YOUR SECOND

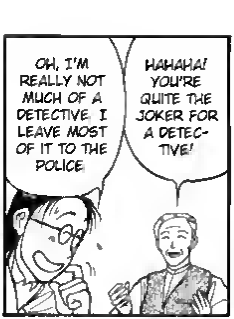
GOOD-BYE, NOW.
SA-KUYA-SAN.
SAKUYA-SAN!
I'M ALL RIGHT.
ぽっ
PLEASE CALL ME SAYOKO.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TONIGHT.
HM. THAT'S QUITE A STORY.
THERE WAS NOTHING "OVER-FORWARD" AS THEY SAY ABOUT THAT GIRL.
HATOYAMA
YOU ARE RADIANT.
SAYOKO-SAN...
17
VERY DIFFERENT FROM ME.
YOU ARE...

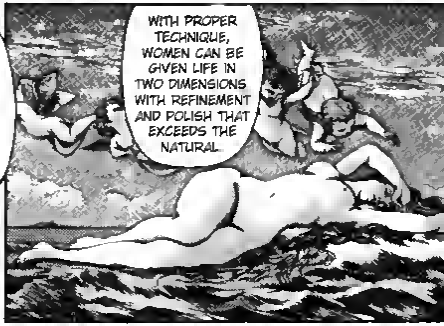
ACCORDING TO HIS RELATIVES, WHEN THEY TRAVELED FOR BUSINESS HE IGNORED HIS JOB IN FAVOR OF BUYING UP...
ALL THE EXPENSIVE ART HE COULD FIND. THEY QUARRELED CONSTANTLY, AND THE UPSHOT WAS, WELL...
THAT WAS A FORTUNATE ENCOUNTER I LEARNED A NUMBER OF THINGS
WE'VE FOUND OUT A LOT AS WELL.
THE MASTER OF THAT HOUSE? HIS WIFE LEFT HIM
10
NO, THAT'S NOT QUITE WHAT I MEANT.
WELL, I WASN'T EXPECTING YOU TO SOLVE IT OVERNIGHT.
HM...
NOW THAT WE COULDN'T FIND OUT...
AND WHERE EXACTLY DID THIS WIFE GO?
I'VE ACQUIRED A NEW MOTIVATION.
AND BESIDES THAT...
REALLY? SAKUYA-KUN, ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
I FEEL AS IF I'M BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THIS CASE
I WANTED TO GO OUT AND CONFRONT THE NIGHT.

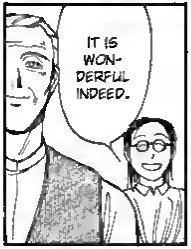
PARDON ME.
HUH?
Ha ha, thank you
I'M EMBARRASSED TO ADMIT IT, BUT I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE INCIDENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE.
ER, I AM CURRENTLY ENGAGED AS A DETECTIVE ...
I WONDER IF I MIGHT BE ABLE TO SPEAK WITH THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE.
OH, SO YOU ALSO HAVE AN INTEREST IN ART?
BUT, REALLY, MY INVESTIGATION IS ALSO AN EXCUSE TO MEET YOU, NUKIKI-SAN. I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT YOUR ART COLLECTION.
18
GOODNESS ME, IT'S LIKE BEING IN A MUSEUM OF BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.
AND THAT VIRGIN MARY IS SPLENDID AS WELL ...
THE GOTHIC USE OF COLOR IN THAT PAINTING OVER THERE MAKES ME THINK IT MUST BE A PISANELLO REPRODUCTION, NO?
OH, YES. I DON'T KNOW ALL THAT MUCH ABOUT IT, BUT I LOVE IT.
SFX: COUGH



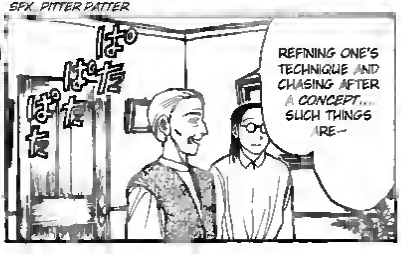





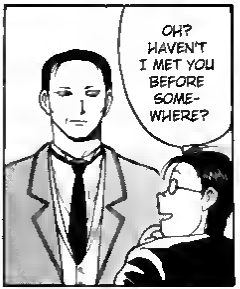


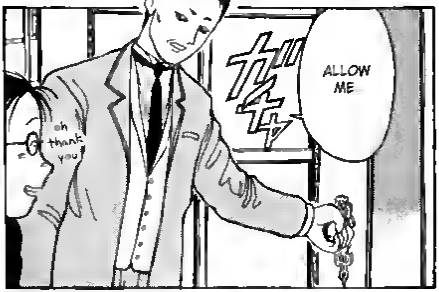

SFX: PITTER PATTER



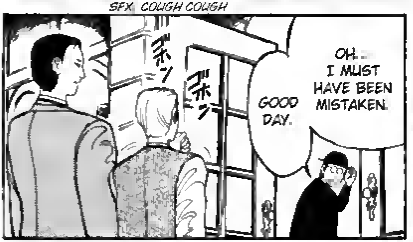
OH, WHAT'S THIS? YOU ALREADY KNOW SAYOKO-SAN?
SA-SAKUYA-SAN?!
WELCOME HOME, SAYOKO-SAN
OH! YOU HAVE A VISITOR! I'M SO SORRY.
P-PLEASE PARDON MY INTRUSION.
Y-YES ...
OH, REALLY, IS THAT SO?
OH, I HAVE A FRIEND WHO ATTENDS THE IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE SAYOKO-SAN USED TO LIVE. SO WE'RE SLIGHTLY ACQUAINTED. YES... THAT'S IT.

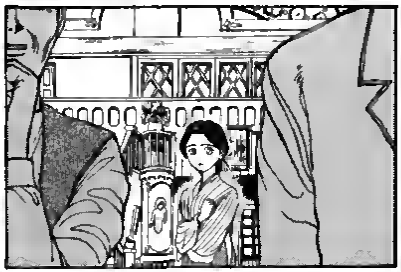
THAT IS WHERE BEAUTY LIES.
IN EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THE INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS THAT COMPOSE A REAL WOMAN
THE SPARKLE IN HER EYES...
THE FIRMNESS OF SA-YOKO-SAN'S SKIN...
DID YOU NOTICE THAT...?
EVEN WITH THE MOST DEVOTED ARTISTIC TECHNI-QUE?
JUST HOW MUCH OF THAT COULD EVER BE EXPRESSED IN A PAIN-TING...

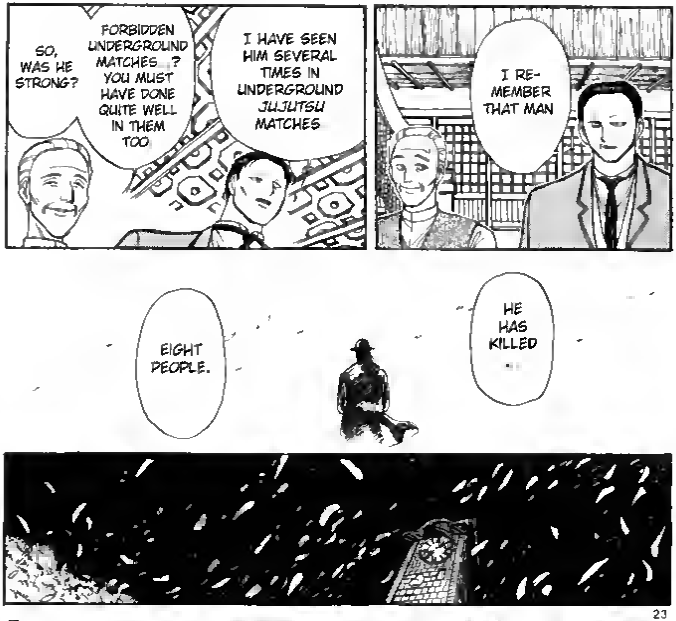


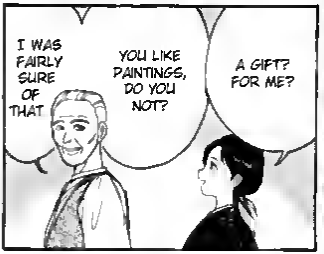

SFX: COUGH COUGH

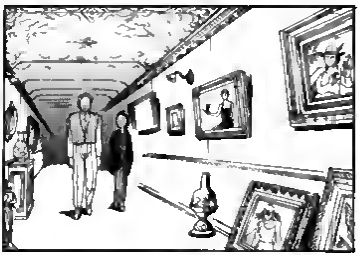


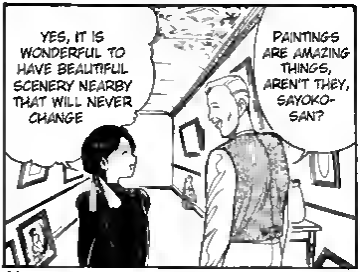


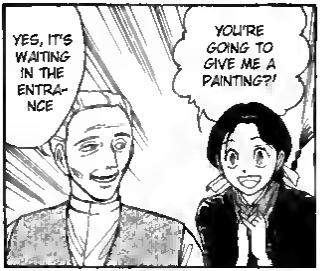

SO, WAS HE STRONG?
FORBIDDEN UNDERGROUND MATCHES...? YOU MUST HAVE DONE QUITE WELL IN THEM TOO
I HAVE SEEN HIM SEVERAL TIMES IN UNDERGROUND JUJUTSU MATCHES
I REMEMBER THAT MAN
HE HAS KILLED
EIGHT PEOPLE.

PERHAPS I SHOULD GO OUTSIDE AGAIN TONIGHT
.....
OH, MY... WHATEVER HAS BECOME OF THE SAYOKO WHO WAS SO SCARED OF THE DARK?



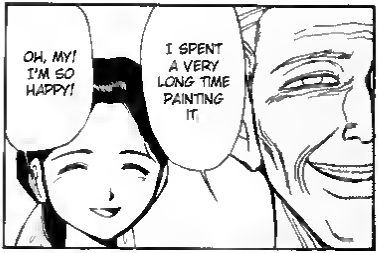



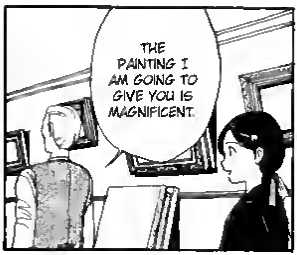


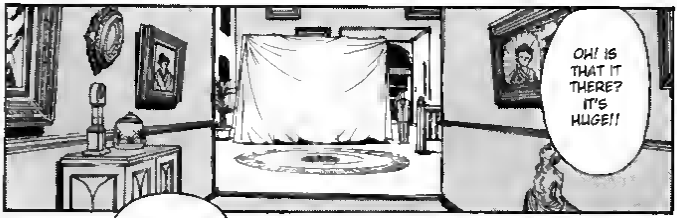



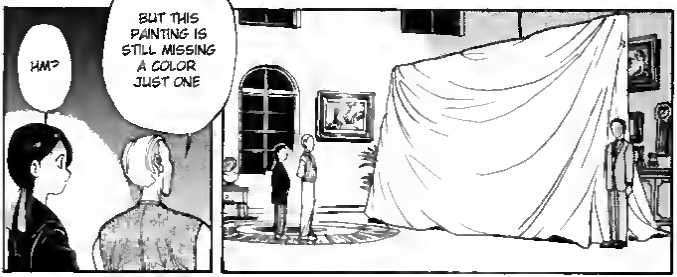



SFX: COUGH COUGH


OH, MY! I'M SO HAPPY!
I SPENT A VERY LONG TIME PAINTING IT


THE PAINTING I AM GOING TO GIVE YOU IS MAGNIFICENT.


OH! IS THAT IT THERE? IT'S HUGE!!


HM?
BUT THIS PAINTING IS STILL MISSING A COLOR JUST ONE

バサ
THAT COLOR...
A MISSING COLOR? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

IS YOU, SAYOKO-SAN.

translation by funnuraba tumblr com

(Translation notes will follow the second chapter)

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